RingCentral

THE CUSTOMER SERVICE GUIDE TO APPLE BUSINESS CHAT

WHAT IS THIS GUIDE ABOUT?
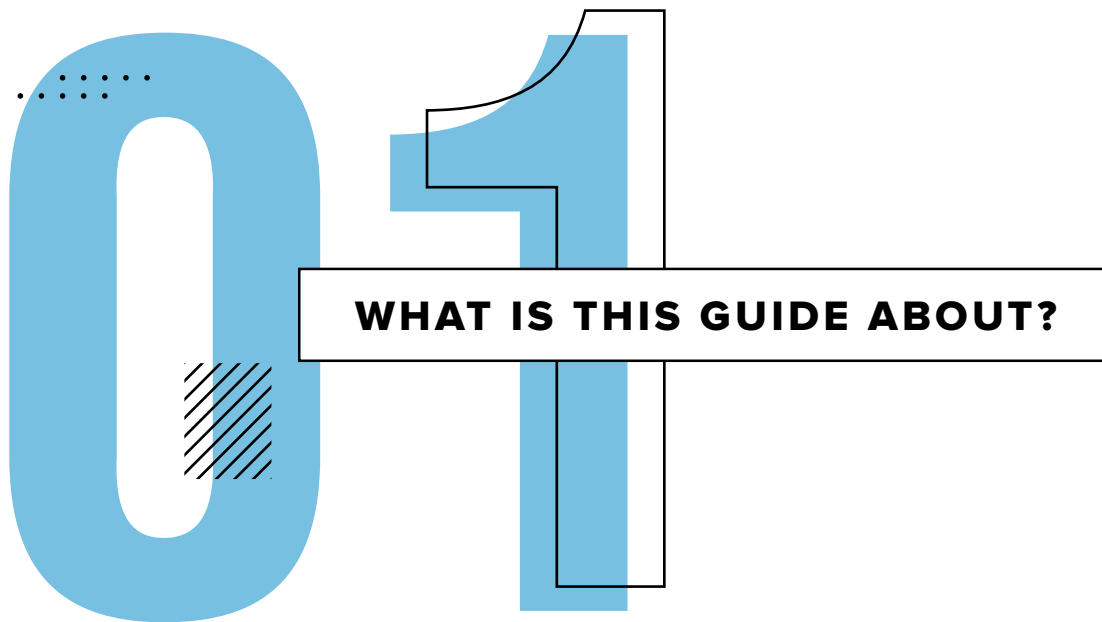
The customer engagement landscape is evolving. And today, there's a new communication medium: digital messaging.

Off the back of their success in personal communication, giants like Apple, Google, and Facebook have all launched personal communication platforms, redefining what customer service actually means and how it can be offered.

Knowing it's no small feat to keep pace with the changing landscape, we've developed this guide to give you an in-depth look at Apple Business Chat:

- Why customers have naturally turned to messaging apps for communicating with brands

- What Apple Business Chat is, and how it integrates with your existing customer communication systems.

- How organizations are already implementing Apple Business Chat to future-proof their customer engagement strategies.

02

THE RISE OF CONSUMER-TO-BUSINESS MESSAGING

The smartphone has created a new generation of communication systems, which operate almost imperceptibly in the background of our lives. Messaging apps like Apple Messages, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger handle billions of communications per day as people manage their personal and professional lives from the palm of their hand.

The attraction of these messaging apps is clear: they offer asynchronous conversations, which make it possible to spread an interaction over hours and even days. Users can drop a conversation in January and effortlessly pick up where they left off in February.

As these new messaging apps grow, they are supplanting older outmoded technologies like SMS. The text-only medium simply cannot compete with today's rich communication services, which allow users to easily send and receive photos, video, hyperlinks, voice messages and more. Experts estimate the number of mobile messaging app users will reach 171.3 million by 2022, and project that more than half the US population will use a messaging app by 2022.

Although messaging apps have been used largely within a personal context, consumers are beginning to use them for their service needs, with conversations from their favorite brands (Nike, Apple, Amazon) sitting right next to interactions with their mom. That puts those brands on another level.

While there is a great opportunity to utilize customer interaction data to improve the user journey, your business will be challenged to seamlessly and efficiently handle a large influx of new customer interactions.

THE RISE OF CONSUMER-TO-BUSINESS MESSAGING

171.3 MILLION

Mobile messaging app users are estimated to **exist by 2022**

MORE THAN 50%

of all people are estimated to be using a **messaging app by 2022**

03

WHAT IS APPLE BUSINESS CHAT?

What is Apple Business Chat?

Business chat is a rich communication service built directly into Apple's smartphone operating system (iOS). It enables customers to communicate with your business using Messages on their iPhone, iPad, Mac, and Apple Watch. Using Business Chat, customers can always reach a live person and are always in control of whether they share their contact information with a business. Plus, it's easily discoverable, with users able to begin conversations from a brand's website, iOS app, email, Safari, Apple Maps, or Spotlight.

Brief history

Apple released Business Chat in 2018 to impressive industry fanfare. It was one of the first messaging apps with adedicated business product—and it signaled the start of a new era.

Why users want it

When Apple released Business Chat, companies flocked to integrate it into their digital customer service systems to augment their support capabilities. Through their rich feature list, brands could present different sizes or color options, different rooms, or even phone plans.

Customers want to be able to initiate a conversation from any brand or device touchpoint like a website, app, email, retail store, or leaflet, and they want the conversation on their platform of choice. Ultimately, it's about communicating with the customer on their terms — their schedule, their channel, their purpose.

04

WHAT CAN APPLE BUSINESS CHAT DO?

Business Chat is much more than a basic chat platform. It's deeply integrated with Apple's core services like email, web, calendar, maps, and payments, and can call on their functionality from within a message.

Apple beta-tested Business Chat with their App Store, trialing new features and improving general performance. By the time they released it to the public, it was good enough for Apple and, therefore, good enough for almost every other company. Here is a taste of the advanced functionality on offer.

- **Schedule Appointments:** Show your customers a calendar and allow them to choose a time slot for an appointment or delivery.

- **Give Directions:** Share your location details and automatically show your customer how to get to your store.

- **Resolve Issues:** Help customers fix problems right in the chat window. Customers can share photos, videos, and URLs to help you diagnose their problems.

- **Make Purchases:** Apple Pay is integrated with Business Chat so customers can make payments within the conversation.

- **Handle Custom Activities:** Business Chat is designed for customization so you can build custom Messages apps for specialized tasks.

Even though Apple Business Chat has only been around for a couple of years, early adopters are already using the technology in innovative ways.

For example, credit card companies can allow customers to request a replacement card, dispute a charge, or get more information about their card benefits. Food service companies can use Apple Business Chat and QR codes in stadiums and restaurants to streamline ordering food and drinks at events.

05

HOW TO GET STARTED ON APPLE BUSINESS CHAT

Before you can start to communicate with customers through Apple Business Chat, your company should build a strong business case for adding this type of interaction to your communications stack. Your process must be able to identify and authenticate your customers within Apple Business Chat to your Customer Service Platform (CSP) to ensure that you can deliver the experience customers expect when using the service.

1. Research Customer Service Platform (CSP) providers. Apple-approved CSPs:
    - Support asynchronous messaging capabilities
    - Provide intelligent classification, contextualization, and routing of interactions to appropriate agents
    - Deliver technical guidance for integrating Business Chat into their apps and business services
    - Collect CSAT, NPS, along with other valuable customer metrics

2. Ensure you meet the basic requirements to qualify for a Business Chat account:
    - Staff live and available agents during business hours
    - Choose an Apple approved CSP to help deploy your Business Chat solution
    - Identify which Business Chat features you will support (i.e. list picker, authentication, Apple Pay, etc.)

3. Register with Apple Business
    - Apply for access with your organization information
    - Add contacts and assign roles.
    - Administrative: register the organization and approve the Terms of Use (TOU)
    - Technical: set up Business Chat Accounts, CSPs, and Brands
    - Sponsoring executive: senior member of the team to oversee the project and agree to TOU
    - Calculate the average amount of monthly customer interactions you manage

Apple will review your plan as it develops, so to increase your chances of approval, follow Apple's Business Chat Policies and Best Practices.

Tip

Use AI, for example, to automatically classify and allocate incoming messages to agents with the right competency to resolve the issue. And improve resource handling and eliminate duplicate conversations by merging customer identities across all digital channels to get a view into historical interactions.

06

#SHOWTHEMYOUCARE

The playbook for customer success is being rewritten by a new era of digital-first consumers. Every chat, every tweet, every review . . . every customer interaction matters, and today the lifespan of digital interactions is often permanent.

This multi-layer, multi-moment experience with your business defines brand sentiment and directly influences the decisions of future customers and the loyalty of current ones.

Power the future of engagement by seamlessly interacting with customers wherever they are online, for whatever they need, on their terms.

WE SPEAK DIGITAL

RingCentral Engage Digital is a customer service platform for every digital interaction. Schedule a demo today, and see how you can take your customer service strategy to the next level.

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